wherein R^1 and R^2 are individually a hydrogen atom or a saturated or unsaturated aliphatic acyl group having 2-25 carbon atoms or benzoyl group, and R^3 is a hydrogen atom, hydroxyl group, alkyl group, aryl group, or aralkyl group, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof as an effective component.

9. (Amended) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 1, of which the release of esculetin or its derivative is controlled so that the concentration of glucuronic acid conjugates in plasma is maintained at 0.5 μmol/L or more for a period of 10 hours or more after administration when the preparation is orally administered to a beagle dog at a dose of 1-100 mg/kg.

10. (Amended) The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 1, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the preparation to dissolve 80% of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the Japanese Pharmacopoeia (paddle method).

Please enter new claims 11-24 as follows:

11. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 2, of which the release of esculetin or its derivative is controlled so that the concentration of glucuronic acid conjugates in plasma is maintained at 0.5 μmol/L or more for a period of 10 hours or more after administration when the preparation is orally administered to a

beagle dog at a dose of 1-100 mg/kg.

12. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 3, of which the release of esculetin or its derivative is controlled so that the concentration of glucuronic acid conjugates in plasma is maintained at 0.5 μmol/L or more for a period of 10 hours or more after administration when the preparation is orally administered to a beagle dog at a dose of 1-100 mg/kg.

13. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 4, of which the release of esculetin or its derivative is controlled so that the concentration of glucuronic acid conjugates in plasma is maintained at 0.5 μmol/L or more for a period of 10 hours or more after administration when the preparation is orally administered to a beagle dog at a dose of 1-100 mg/kg.

14. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 5, of which the release of esculetin or its derivative is controlled so that the concentration of glucuronic acid conjugates in plasma is maintained at 0.5 μmol/L or more for a period of 10 hours or more after administration when the preparation is orally administered to a beagle dog at a dose of 1-100 mg/kg.

15. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 6, of which the release of esculetin or its derivative is controlled so that the concentration of glucuronic acid conjugates in plasma is maintained at 0.5 μmol/L or more for a period

of

10 hours or more after administration when the preparation is orally administered to a beagle dog at a dose of 1-100 mg/kg.

16. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 7, of which the release of esculetin or its derivative is controlled so that the concentration of glucuronic acid conjugates in plasma is maintained at 0.5 μmol/L or more for a period of 10 hours or more after administration when the preparation is orally administered to a beagle dog at a dose of 1-100 mg/kg.

17. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 8, of which the release of esculetin or its derivative is controlled so that the concentration of glucuronic acid conjugates in plasma is maintained at 0.5 μmol/L or more for a period of 10 hours or more after administration when the preparation is orally administered to a beagle dog at a dose of 1-100 mg/kg.

18. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 2, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the preparation to dissolve 80% of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the Japanese Pharmacopoeia (paddle method).

19. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 3, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the

preparation to dissolve 80% of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the Japanese Pharmacopoeia (paddle method).

20. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 4, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the preparation to dissolve 80% of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the Japanese Pharmacopoeia (paddle method).

21. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 5, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the preparation to dissolve 80% of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the Japanese Pharmacopoeia (paddle method).

22. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 6, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the preparation to dissolve 80% of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the Japanese Pharmacopoeia (paddle method).

23. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 7, of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the preparation to dissolve 80% of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the Japanese Pharmacopoeia (paddle method).

24. The controlled-release oral preparation of esculetin according to claim 8,

of which the release of esculetin is controlled so that the period of time required for the preparation to dissolve 80% of esculetin is 0.5 to 23 hours as determined by the dissolution test according to the Japanese Pharmacopoeia (paddle method).